

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, WB

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF NEW BERLIN GOVERNMENT

REFS: USBERLIN 402, USBERLIN 446

1. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SPD AND FDP ON FORMATION OF NEW BERLIN GOVERNMENT ARE NOW TAKING PLACE AT TECHNICAL LEVEL. WALTER RASCH, ONE OF PRINCIPAL FDP NEGOTIATORS, TOLD LIAISON OFFICER MARCH 21 THAT DISCUSSIONS ON UNIVERSITY REFORM, HEALTH MATTERS AND OTHER POLICY AREAS HAD TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN FDP AND SPD REPRESENTATIVES ON MARCH 20 AND 21 IN FRIENDLY, FRANK AND BUSINESSLIKE ATMOSPHERE. DISCUSSIONS TO CONTINUE WEEK OF MARCH 24.

2. MISOFF ASKED ABOUT PERSISTENCE OF RUMORS ON POSSIBLE "GRAND COALITION" BETWEEN CDU AND SPD. RASCH ADMITTED THAT MANY SPD OFFICIALS WERE LEARY OF JOINING WITH FDP AND WOULD PREFER TO RULE BERLIN WITH CDU. HE

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ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT BASED ON INITIAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN

GOVMAYOR SCHUETZ AND FDP CHAIRMAN LUEDER (USBERLIN 446), NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN TWO PARTIES WERE CONTINUING ON FIRM UNDERSTANDING THAT COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD RESULT. RASCH STATED THAT DIFFICULT QUESTION OF PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS(SENATORS, SENATSDIREKTOREN) WOULD BE TACKLED AT MEETINGS TO BEGIN ON ARPIL 2. HE ADDED LIBERALS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE EVERYTHING READY BY APRIL 10.

3. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND CDU CHAIRMAN PETER LORENZ IS STILL PREPARED TO JOIN WITH SPD IN "GRAND COALITION" AND WOULD NOT INSIST ON BECOMING GOVERNING MAYOR. THIS COULD MAKE PROSPECT HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE TO SCHUETZ SINCE MANY MEMBERS OF SPD RIGHT WING STRONGLY PREFER COALITION WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS RATHER THAN LIBERALS. (LEADER OF "YOUNG RIGHT" FACTION OF SPD, PETER MAENNING, TOLD LIAISON OFFICER MARCH 6 THAT BERLIN COALITION OF SPD-CDU, WHILE DESIRABLE FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, WAS PROBABLY NOT ATTAINABLE.) AS LEADER OF PARTY WITH MOST SEATS, LORENZ WILL IN ANY CASE BE PRESIDENT OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AN OFFICE WITH CONCISERABLE PRESTIGE AND REPRESENTATIONAL PREQUISITES, FROM WHICH HE COULD EASILY RULE BERLIN IN TANDEM WITH SCHUETZ, A CLOSE FRIEND.GEORGE

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